

Serial No. 10/713,012

USU-12-06

**REMARKS**

Claims 164-175 are pending in this application. Claims 164-169 have been allowed. Claims 170, 173-175 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

**Proposed Amendment**

Applicants have submitted the foregoing Proposed Amendments to the claims for purposes of discussion with the Examiner.

Claim 170 is amended to set forth a "lot" of semiconductor wafers", and to clarify that the time interval assigned either (1) for transporting the lot from one of the processing apparatuses to another by the inter-apparatus transporter or for (2) processing in each of the processing apparatuses ... is set to N multiplication of a predetermined unit time, with N being a positive integer, that is common to all of the plurality of the processing apparatuses and that is longer than the shortest required time for processing in each of the processing apparatuses but shorter than the longest required time for processing in each of the processing apparatuses.

Claim 173 has been amended in a manner similar to claim 171, however N is defined by being a positive integer, that is common to all of the plurality of the processing apparatuses and the inter-apparatus transporter and that is longer than a minute but shorter than the longest required time for either processing in each of the processing apparatuses or for transporting by the inter-apparatus transporter.

Claim 174 defines a plurality of time intervals assigned to the processing apparatuses each including time for...that are set to N multiplication of a predetermined unit time that is

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common to all of the plurality of the processing apparatuses with N being a positive integer, and that is longer than a minute but shorter than the longest required time for processing in each of the processing apparatuses. Further, the time interval assigned to transporting the semiconductor wafers from one of the processing apparatuses to another by the inter-apparatus transporter is scheduled by use of one of the time intervals.

Claim 175 sets forth that the interval assigned to each of the processing apparatuses including time for... is set to N multiplication of a predetermined unit time that is common to all of the plurality of the processing apparatuses, with N being a positive integer, and that is longer than a minute but shorter than the longest required time for either processing in each of the processing apparatuses or for transporting by the inter-apparatus transporter. Further, the time interval between the setting of a semiconductor wafer at the interface of one of the processing apparatuses by the inter-apparatus transporter and the setting at the interface of another processing apparatus by the inter-apparatus transporter is set to M multiplication of the predetermined unit time, with M being a positive integer.

Please contact the undersigned attorney so that the foregoing proposed amendments can be discussed.

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